

December 2018

Monthly Newsletter of  
*The Methodist Church*

# VISITOR

Growing Disciples  
Loving Our  
Community  
for Christ

## Straight Talk With Steve



*Luke 1:76-77*

*76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, 77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,*

This is the first year that I can remember in decades when I wanted to decorate for Christmas before Thanksgiving came. Over the last several years I have found myself falling in love with Christmas in new ways.

...I have learned to appreciate the people that I get to share Christmas with in more profound ways. So many are now gone and I try to honor them by pouring myself into those loved ones that are still present.

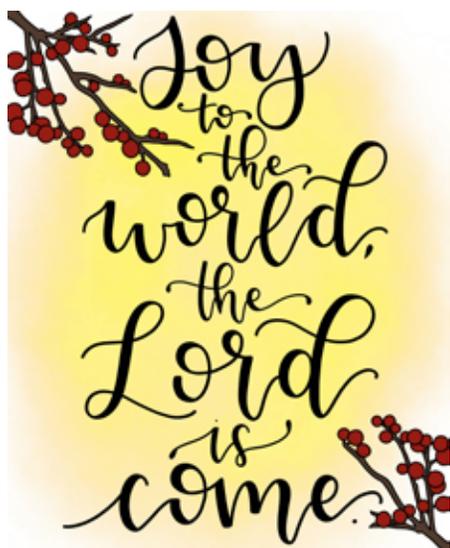
...I look at the Spirit that is present in our society throughout these

days and instead of being unhappy about consumerism etc. I have learned to let myself enjoy the truth that God created all of us with a deep reservoir of hope and love. At Christmas even people who deny God give witness to His presence by engaging in giving and caring.

...I have learned to relish the chance to preach on Christmas eve. The more I experience Christ working in my heart and life the more I want to tell people that accepting Him into their hearts is the beginning of an amazing and beautiful journey.

...Our church is engaged in many activities during Advent and Christmas. We celebrate, worship, commune, serve and give. I pray that as this season moves forward each of you will add your presence to these activities so that the impact we make is multiplied.

Peace,  
*Steve*



# Adult Ministries

## Changing Lives with the Grace of God!

That's what happens in Grace Groups.

How is your Soul? Our Grace Groups are a place where you can ask tough questions, meet people who genuinely care about you and learn to receive and give God's Grace. Our Grace Groups provide an environment for you to make life-changing relationships while growing in your relationship with Christ.

We currently have 95 people actively attending Grace Groups, 95 lives that are changing with the Grace of God. We don't want to stop until Everyone is Invited; invite a friend, neighbor or co-worker to attend a Grace Group with you today, don't wait until after the holidays!!

Grace Groups meet throughout the week in homes and on campus, see the list below to choose a group that meets your schedule. Need more information? Contact Kelly by calling 627-1660 or email [kellyvumc@gmail.com](mailto:kellyvumc@gmail.com).

### Women's Grace Groups

1st & 3rd Mondays at 6:15 p.m.

Jeanine Gaylor (in home) [jeaninemsnyder@gmail.com](mailto:jeaninemsnyder@gmail.com)

2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.

Billie Young (in home) [bnutritious@comcast.net](mailto:bnutritious@comcast.net)

1st & 3rd Wednesdays at 6:45 p.m.

Kelly Deditius (on campus) [kellyvumc@gmail.com](mailto:kellyvumc@gmail.com)

2nd & 4th Wednesdays at 6:45 p.m.

Kelly Deditius (on campus) [kellyvumc@gmail.com](mailto:kellyvumc@gmail.com)

Every Other Wednesday at 6:45 p.m.

Pastor Steve (on campus) [pastorstevevumc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorstevevumc@gmail.com)

2nd & 4th Thursdays at Noon

Linda Galka (on campus) [lindavumc@gmail.com](mailto:lindavumc@gmail.com)

Every Other Friday at 10:00 a.m.

Kim Gunter (in home) [kim4pop@gmail.com](mailto:kim4pop@gmail.com)

### Men's Grace Groups

Alternating Wednesdays at 6:45 p.m.

Pastor Steve (on campus) [pastorstevevumc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorstevevumc@gmail.com)

2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Dick Bayard (in home) [rbayard@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rbayard@sbcglobal.net)

Every Other Wednesday at 6:45 p.m.

Pastor Steve (on campus) [pastorstevevumc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorstevevumc@gmail.com)

1st & 3rd Thursdays at 6:00 p.m.

David Gaylor (on campus) [dtgaylor@aol.com](mailto:dtgaylor@aol.com)

2nd & 4th Thursdays at 2:00 p.m.

Pastor Don (on campus) [pastordonr@gmail.com](mailto:pastordonr@gmail.com)

2nd & 4th Sundays at 7:30 a.m.

Tom Lockwood (on campus) [tomlgeinc@gmail.com](mailto:tomlgeinc@gmail.com)

Para Varones en espanol Miercoles at 6:00 p.m. – F20

Ramon Olivares (559) 798-6711

Wishing you a Grace filled Christmas,  
*Kelly Deditius*

Director of Care Ministries and Small Groups, [kellyvumc@gmail.com](mailto:kellyvumc@gmail.com)

### NEXT STEPS:

If you are new here, have only been attending a short time or just looking to take the next step in your faith journey, here is what we do at The Methodist Church: Worship, Connect, Grow and Serve.

### WORSHIP

3 Service Times

2 Languages

1 Church

### CONNECT

#### Community Groups

Sunday School Classes and Bible Studies

Women's and Men's Ministry Groups  
Senior Adult Ministry

Serpralo (a women's fellowship group)

UMW (women's group with a missional emphasis)

### GROW

#### Grace Groups

Men's and Women's Groups on campus and in homes

#### Discipleship Groups

Men and Women Disciples

### SERVE

#### Ministry Teams

Care Ministries, Pound of Love, Oval Outreach, Hospitality and First Impressions, Worship Teams, Tech Team, Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Administration (office), Special Event Teams, Helping Hands.

Take the next step and contact Kelly by calling 627-1660 or email [kellyvumc@gmail.com](mailto:kellyvumc@gmail.com).

## Service of Remembrance

**Sunday, December 9 • 3:00 p.m.**

The Holidays can hurt too. If you are grieving the loss of a loved one, we can help. Join us for a Service of Remembrance and prepare to enjoy the Holidays this year. **Please call the church office with the name of your loved one.**

## Pound of Love

The *Pound of Love* food distribution is **Wednesday, December 12**, 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. in the Courtyard. Your helping hands are always welcome: sorting, packing, distributing food or helping with clerical work. If you'd like to volunteer and give a *Pound of Love*, please arrive at 9:30 a.m. in the Courtyard.

## Food Pantry Supplies

Bags of groceries are given to those in need in our community between the monthly food distribution dates. Please pick up a few extra nonperishable groceries and help us restock our *Pound of Love* Pantry. Items needed include: rice, beans, pasta, sauce, cereal, peanut butter, jelly, and inexpensive can openers.

## La Posada

Join us for La Posada **Wednesday, December 5 at 5:30 p.m.** Enjoy a delicious meal and travel from door to door with Joseph and Mary as they search for lodging.

## Christmas Eve Services

**Monday, December 24  
4:00 & 7:00 p.m.**

We welcome you to join us for our Christmas Eve Candlelight Services. Invite a friend or family member to attend this wonderful service.



## Care Ministries

Help someone who is hurting in our community. Invite a friend, neighbor or co-worker to one of our Care Ministry programs, DivorceCare, DC4K, The Big D, GriefShare, this spring. Contact Kelly for registration information 627-1660.

## Caregivers Connection

Our Caregivers Connection group is growing! If you have a loved one who has dementia you are invited to join us on the third Tuesday of each month. We'll meet December 18 from 1:30-3:00 p.m. in Room F15. This is a great opportunity to share our needs and gather caring support and valuable information for what is often a long and lonely journey. Please contact Pastor Don for more information.

## Book Review

***Hope for the future  
Answering God's call to  
justice for our children***

By Shannon Daley-Harris



The author of this book Shannon Daley-Harris is a preacher, leader, and activist. She has been with the Children's Defense Fund (C.D.F.) for more than 25 years.

This book is a collection of meditations and questions that promote a conversation about what action we can take to listen to our children and improve the lives of children and youth in our world.

Stories are used to present the stumbling blocks that face our children and youth. The author then uses scripture to illuminate ways to define our calling and provide a foundation from which to start and to encourage us to act. The task is enormous and there will be many obstacles to overcome but we can look to scripture for examples and guidance.

This book can be found in the U.M.W. section, subsection social Justice, of the church library.

Submitted by,  
Lisa Richardson



# Children & Youth

## Children's Ministry

We are nearing the end of our curriculum that covers the life of Jesus. On a recent Wednesday night, Miss Ashlie was leading the children in an activity that helped them to realize the horrible things that Jesus endured on our behalf. Afterward, she asked them how they felt knowing that those awful things had happened to Jesus. Most of the kids had simple but sincere one-word answers. Sad, was the most common answer. There was one answer that stood out from the others. A young first grader spoke up and said, "It makes me feel sad and also thankful. I'm sad, because he didn't do anything wrong, but I am thankful because he did that so I wouldn't have to." It is amazing to

hear that kind of insight come out of such a young person. Her answer stayed with me for a long time and as I continued to think about it, I was even more in awe of the Holy Spirit's work. Like many children today, this young lady spends some time at dad's house and some time at mom's house. We don't see her on a weekly basis. Even still God uses the time that she is there. We are there to plant the seeds. God is tending to those seeds and working on her heart every moment of every day. It is an awesome privilege to witness the work God is doing in the lives of His children - the youngest and the oldest.

*Debbie Petty*  
debbievumc@gmail.com

*And they went with haste  
and found **Mary**  
and **Joseph,**  
and **the baby**  
lying in a manger.*



## Youth Ministry

Happy Holidays from your Youth Ministry!

We are looking forward to the excitement of the holidays and the fun things we will be doing in the New Year!

Our Youth are gearing up for a trip to Hartland for Winter Camp. Please keep an eye out for an upcoming fundraiser opportunity to help our youth earn funds to go to camp. If you are interested in helping get our youth to Winter Camp, we would love to have you as a driver! We need volunteers to help drive the kids

to Hartland Christian Camp Friday, February 15 and pick up on Monday, February 18.

Looking ahead to 2019, all of our church ministries are encouraging our laity to find a place to grace others and serve within the church. Please consider signing up to assist in the Youth Program one or two Sundays or Wednesdays during the year. If you are interested, please contact me and I can get you on our schedule.

It is a blessing and a joy to spend time with your youth and watch them continue to grow in their relationships with Christ.

Blessings,

*Kristi Boydston*, Youth Director  
kristivumc@gmail.com



### **Methodist Church Youth Ministry Fundraiser**

Friday, December 14

6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Ages: 4 to 9 year olds

Cost: \$20 per child and  
\$10 for each additional child

*Pizza*

*Cookie decorating*

*Fun & Games*

*Movie*

Sign-Up Required by

December 12 at 1:30 p.m.

Contact Kristi Boydston at  
559-627-1660 for more information.





# Ministry News

## Christmas Blessings

*"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." Luke 2:10*

The first words spoken by the angel of the Lord regarding the birth of the Messiah were words of joy and good news. Indeed, it is good news that a Savior was born! A Savior for us! A reason to celebrate. This Christmas season before you begin writing your far too many lists of gift ideas, décor possibilities, recipe ingredients, and entertaining obligations, set aside time each day to prepare your heart for Christmas. Make that your first priority. It's far too easy to get caught up in the bedlam of Christmas; the material aspects of the season that overshadow the promised "good news of great joy". Begin each day reflecting on the proclaimed "good news of great joy".

It is a fact that the commercialization of Christmas leads to depression, overeating, anger, debt, and numerous other relational and health problems. Certainly not the "good news of great joy for all



people" that the angel of the Lord was proclaiming. This Christmas, embrace the good news that was promised. Slow down! As Ann Voskamp reminds us, "life is not an emergency, something to be sped through." Neither is the season of Advent. Slow down. Savor it all—the family traditions, the celebrations with friends, the music, the food, and most of all, the worship as we prepare our hearts to welcome the Savior.

Don't simply tolerate, rather, celebrate Christmas!

*Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11*

Christmas Blessings,

*Linda Galka*

Adult Programs

[lindavumc@gmail.com](mailto:lindavumc@gmail.com)

## Adult Sunday School

The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem

An adult Sunday school Advent study by well-known author and Methodist pastor, Adam Hamilton. In this 5 week DVD study we'll travel, on video, from Nazareth to Bethlehem. As we take the journey, Pastor Hamilton will share personal reflections as well as historical information and archeological findings. Join us for the journey each Sunday in December at 10:30 a.m.. Room F21-22.



## Women's Bible Study

***The Gift of the Nutcracker***

In Matt Rawle's newest study, we'll take a look at this Christmas classic in a new way—through the eyes of faith. Rawle uses this timeless tale to help us understand God's greatest of the Christ child and of the kingdom Christ came to build. Like Clara, we too find ourselves pondering a most extraordinary gift. Ladies, please plan to join us as we study together and celebrate the birth of the newborn King. And do bring someone with you! Thursdays at 9:30 a.m December 6, 13, and 20 in Room F10/11. ***Our potluck brunch is December 20. Bring a holiday favorite to share!***



### A heartfelt thank you

Dear Church Family,

It is with mixed emotions, that I am writing this. As most of you know, I am retiring effective January 1, 2019. Please accept my heartfelt thank you for trusting me and giving me the opportunity to serve on staff at our church since 2010. It has been my great pleasure.

And now, I join you, the volunteers, who work tirelessly in ministry at our church to "Create Disciples and Make Christ Known" in our community.

I am looking forward to this new chapter. I am confident that God has many exciting plans for the coming year.

Blessings, *Linda Galka*

# Ministry News

## Gifts of Love

Men's Ministry Gifts of Love for Christmas will take place on December 2 and 9! Help a local family with Gifts of Love for Christmas by selecting a child or entire family to serve with Christmas gifts. We will have a table in the lobby on the specified Sundays with more information.

## Website

Visit our church website. Watch sermons, read newsletters and bulletins and stay up to date on activities around VUMC.

[www.visaliamethodist.org](http://www.visaliamethodist.org)

## Budget Update

Our receipts have been lower this year than in the past several years. We have lost some of our most faithful givers to death and moving away from Visalia. I pray that everyone who is a part of our faith community will be generous as we come to the close of the year.

I am praying that our church will be able to finish the year in the black so that we can begin the new year with a sense of momentum. Thank you for your generosity as you pray about your gift.

Peace, Steve

## Year End Giving

Please submit your year end giving to the church office by December 31 to be included in contributions for 2018. *Contributions received after December 31 will be included in 2019 giving records. Thank you.*

## Join the Tech Team

The Methodist Church Tech Team is looking for a few good men and women interested in being a part of the Worship Arts Tech Team. Learn how to run the lyrics, control the lights, handle the camera during sermons, and become an expert in sound. Please contact Jack Patiño at the church, at 627-1660, or catch him before the 9:15 a.m. service or after the Spanish service on Sunday.



A SEASON  
of JOY



## Friends and Family of the Military

Friends and family of military personnel meet the first Thursday of each month for sharing and prayer. Please join us Thursday, December 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. Everyone is welcome! Contact Nancy Lockwood at 679-8555 for more information.

## SAM

### Senior Adult Ministries

Roger Rocka's Sunday Theater and Brunch Trip will be sponsored by SAM (Senior Adult Ministries). The date is January 13, 2019. Give yourself or yourself and a friend or a friend a fantastic Christmas gift. The cost is \$55.00 and includes transportation, brunch, show, and gratuities. See Dennis Goodenough or Daryl Behrens for reservations.

## Social Media

Follow us on Instagram and Facebook! The more you follow, the more we'll post!

Facebook:

Visalia United Methodist Church

Instagram:

visaliamethodist

## E-mail Address Update

Does the church office have your current e-mail address? Please list your email address on the registration book on Sundays or send a note to [vumcgmail.com](mailto:vumcgmail.com). Thank you.

Visalia United Methodist Church  
December 2018 Visitor Newsletter  
P.O. Box 7360  
Visalia, CA 93290

# The Methodist Church

## Church Office Hours

Monday - Thursday  
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Closed 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Friday 9:00 a.m. - Noon

PHONE (559) 627-1660

FAX (559) 740-0801

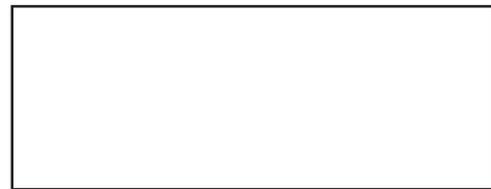
**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 7360, Visalia, CA 93290

**WEB SITE:** [www.visaliamethodist.org](http://www.visaliamethodist.org)

Please e-mail special recognitions or articles for the  
**January Visitor** to [judyvumc@gmail.com](mailto:judyvumc@gmail.com) **and**  
[joannavumc@gmail.com](mailto:joannavumc@gmail.com) **before December 15.**

The weekly bulletin deadline is Wednesdays at Noon.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



### Sunday Worship Schedule

**9:15 a.m. Traditions Worship Service**

**10:30 a.m. Sunday Connect**

*Programs for all ages*

**10:30 a.m. Oasis Contemporary Service**

**10:30 a.m. Semilla Servicio de Adoracion  
y Alabanza**

### Wednesday Schedule

**6:00 p.m. Programs and Classes**

*For all ages*

### Coming Events

**December 5**

*La Posada*

**December 8**

*UMW Christmas Tea*

**December 9**

*Service of Remembrance*

**December 16**

*Christmas Program*

**December 24**

*Christmas Eve Services*

*4:00 & 7:00 p.m.*

Visalia United Methodist Church • 5200 W. Caldwell Ave.  
[www.visaliamethodist.org](http://www.visaliamethodist.org) • 559-627-1660 • [visaliaumc@gmail.com](mailto:visaliaumc@gmail.com)